

Know Before You Go

Principal Investigators (PIs) planning to work in the Arctic under an NSF grant should consider the following information BEFORE leaving for the field:

The PI and institution are responsible for the safety of team members conducting field work on the grant. See NSF Grant General Conditions for specific language regarding responsibility and liability.

If a field team member becomes sick or is injured, the institution is responsible for all costs associated with transporting the person from the field to a medical facility or the person's home, along with all medical expenses incurred. Medical evacuation insurance is an allowable grant expense.

Science party members are generally responsible for their own cold weather clothing. PIs can request funds in the grant to provide appropriate and well-fitting gear for field team members.

Prior to going to the field, ensure to consider the following items:

- If something happens to a field team member, who contacts the family? When do you contact someone? For what type of injury/illness? Check with your HR department for protocol. It is important that all incidents and near misses are reported to the PI, the institution's Risk Management/Health and Safety department, and the Battelle ARO Science Project Manager (Science PM) as soon as possible after the event.
- Ensure that each field team member has listed at least two Emergency contacts. Provide the list of contacts to your HR department: a team member who is not going into the field, your Science PM, or other contact.
- Alcohol consumption is a risk factor in the field. You should discuss the availability and safe use of alcohol at the field site.
- Know if anyone has any health issues before going to a remote location and assess the risk factors. If you have concerns, discuss options for requesting physical exams with your university prior to deployment or talk to your NSF program manager about the option of having your team go through the NSF physical qualification process.
- Does anyone on your team have first aid training? CPR training? Know and document who on your team to ask for help in the event of an emergency. Consider sending team members to a wilderness first aid training before the start of a field season.
- What is the remote field experience level of the members of your team? You may want to consider an Arctic Field Training or other types of training before starting a field

season. To learn more about the types of field safety training Battelle ARO provides to researchers, please contact arctic.planning@battelle.org.

- Research teams are encouraged to develop a field emergency action plan (EAP) that outlines project field activities, safety resources, and guides a response in the event of an emergency. Resources, including a template, are available by request via email to the [HSE Team Lead](#).
- Research teams must name a health and safety emergency contact for the project fieldwork. This individual should be associated with the grantee institution, familiar with the project's field activities, and available 24/7 to receive emergency communications and to coordinate institutional responses.
- Workers' Compensation (WC) insurance covers employees for work related injuries on the job. PIs and field team members need to contact their institution's human resources department to learn whether the institution's WC policy covers and considers field work as 'part of the job.' PIs who are taking students into the field should review Field Program Considerations for Institutions, as the document represents the standard of practice for most institutional activities that involve students. Please contact your Health, Safety & Environment or risk management department for further direction and/or assistance.
- Confirm with your HR department that you and your team are covered with Medical Emergency evacuation insurance. This type of coverage is in addition to WC insurance. Know who to contact in the event this is needed. This type of coverage may be an allowable cost under your grant if you need to purchase policies for your field team members. Should the field team leader collect insurance policy information for each person in the event they need treatment during fieldwork?
- For emergency and WC purposes, the university/institution is the Employer, the PI is the supervisor/manager, and field team members are employees.
- If you are a volunteer or have a volunteer or non-university employee on your team, how is that person covered for workers' compensation (WC), medical insurance, and medical/search and rescue (SAR) evacuation? The PI and institution are responsible for any volunteers on the project. If they are not employees of the institution, in the event of an emergency how will this person be covered?
- Plans differ for work conducted inside the United States (US) and outside of the US. If working outside of the US, confirm that the institution's WC covers this activity. If not, look into other forms of coverage for traveling outside of the US. Work with your HR department on this.
- For projects outside of the US, consider registering with the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).